



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/648,058	08/26/2003	John Yates	31104-6	2933
7590	09/29/2006		EXAMINER	
Woodard, Emhardt, Moriarty, McNett & Henry LLP Bank One Center/Tower 111 Monument Circle, Suite 3700 Indianapolis, IN 46204-5137			JACKSON, ANDRE L	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
				3677

DATE MAILED: 09/29/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	10/648,058	YATES, JOHN	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	Andre' L. Jackson	3677	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 18 July 2006.

2a) This action is **FINAL**. 2b) This action is non-final.

3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 1-4 is/are pending in the application.
4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6) Claim(s) 1-4 is/are rejected.

7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.

Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) All b) Some * c) None of:
1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
 Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
4) Interview Summary (PTO-413)
 Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
5) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
6) Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114

A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on July 18, 2006 has been entered.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 1-3 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Reiter in view of USPN 4,069,554 to Minolla et al. Reiter discloses a slide buckle comprising; a first horizontal member (18) having first and second ends; a second horizontal member (19) having third and fourth ends; a first vertical member (11) having a top surface and a bottom surface extending between the first and third ends; a second vertical member (12) having a top surface and a bottom surface extending between the second and fourth ends; a first ear (16) extending away from the junction between the second horizontal member and the first vertical member; and a second ear (16) extending away from the junction between the second horizontal member and the second vertical member; and a third horizontal member (13) having a first

substantially c-shaped end (14) and a second substantially c-shaped end (15); wherein the first substantially c-shaped end engages the first vertical member around both the top and bottom surfaces; wherein the second substantially c-shaped end engages the second vertical member around both the top and bottom surfaces; wherein the third horizontal member is free to slide between the first and second horizontal members while engaging the first and second vertical members around both the top and bottom surfaces; and wherein the ears prevent the third horizontal member from sliding past the ears; and wherein movement of a belt is prevented by a clamping connection formed by the adjacency of the third horizontal member to the first horizontal member when the third horizontal member is slid toward the first horizontal member, and by the adjacency of the third horizontal member to the second horizontal member when the third horizontal member is slid toward the second horizontal member. However, Reiter discloses prongs extending from the third horizontal member, wherein applicant's claims recite a third horizontal member having no prongs.

Minolla et al teaches an adjustable fitting including a first horizontal member (1) having first and second ends; a second horizontal member (30) having third and fourth ends; a first vertical member (Fig. 7) having a top surface and a bottom surface extending between the first and third ends; a second vertical member (Fig. 7) having a top surface and a bottom surface extending between the second and fourth ends; a first ear (first arcuate outer-end section of 16) extending away from the junction between the second horizontal member and the first vertical member; and a second ear (second arcuate outer-end section of 16) extending away from the junction between the second horizontal member and the second vertical member; and a third horizontal member (11) having a first substantially c-shaped end (21, 19, 20) and a second substantially c-shaped

end (21, 19, 20) as seen in Fig. 4; wherein the first substantially c-shaped end engages the first vertical member; wherein the second substantially c-shaped end engages the second vertical member; and wherein the third horizontal member is free to slide between the first and second horizontal members while engaging the first and second vertical members, thus affording a smooth surface such that a webbing is not folded or deflected over rough or knurled surfaces and further providing decreased adjustment forces, minimal working parts, and a low cost of manufacture. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of applicant's invention to modify the slide buckle of Reiter to incorporate the slidable third horizontal member taught by Minolla et al providing an improved efficient slide buckle offering a smooth surface such that a webbing is not folded or deflected over rough or knurled surfaces and further providing decreased adjustment forces, minimal working parts, and a low cost of manufacture.

As to claims 2 and 3, the slide buckle can be rotated at least 45 degrees or 90 degrees from a first position to a second position similar to applicant's invention.

Claim 4 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Reiter in view of Minolla et al and further in view of applicant's admitted prior art figure 2. Reiter in view of Minolla et al makes obvious all of the structural limitations of claim 4 except a first strap enclosed around the first horizontal member and a second strap enclosed around the third horizontal member. As seen in Figs. 1-3, Reiter shows a strap (30) passing through the opening defined in the second horizontal member as claimed. Applicant's admitted prior art figure 2 shows a cross-sectional view of a web adjusting buckle member (10) defining a first (12),

a second (16) and a third (14) horizontal member. Each of the first and third horizontal members are enclosed by a respective strap webbing section (26, 28) of a safety belt system which is adjustable such that a combined length of the respective strap webbings can be changed in order to fit the safety belt system snugly against users of differing sizes. Therefore, it would be obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of applicant's invention to modify the slide buckle of Reiter in view of Minolla et al to incorporate the safety belt system as illustrated by the admitted prior art to provide an enhanced slide buckle useable within a vehicle safety restraint system which is made adjustable such that a combined length of the respective strap webbings can be changed in order to fit the safety belt system snugly against users of differing sizes.

Response to Applicant's Arguments

In response to applicant's remarks and the amendment to the claims in the Amendment filed July 18, 2006, #4,069,554 to Minolla et al has been applied and used in combination with Reiter and Reiter in combination with applicant's admitted prior art. Accordingly, claims 1-4 are found to be unpatentable over the prior art of record.

Conclusion

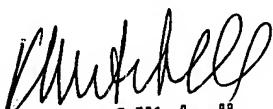
Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Andre' L. Jackson whose telephone number is (571) 272-7067. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon. - Fri. (10 am - 6:30 pm).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Judy J. Swann can be reached on (571) 272-7075. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

André L. Jackson
Patent Examiner
AU 3677

ALJ



Katherine Mitchell
Primary Examiner